

## **Employment Security Department TANF Employment Services Pathway Standards**

Items **bolded** are mandatory standards for local staff to implement. Non-bolded items are strong recommendations based on best practices and program principles.

### ORIENTATION TO TARGETED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- **Parents will be oriented to services and expectations for participation throughout their stay in employment services.**
- **Each parent will be provided information about their next activities and expectations.**

### PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents' participation should reflect a workplace-like environment in order to prepare them to interact with employers, enter employment and keep a job. Attendance, punctuality, participation and dress should all be considered.

Attendance:

- **Parents or staff sign in or out using CATS to verify attendance.**
- **Attendance requirements will be set by the ESD WorkFirst employment counselor based on the Work Skill Assessment and services determination results.**
- **Each parent is required to report in person at least once a week for a meeting with the WorkFirst employment services counselor.**

Participation:

- **Parents are automatically referred back to DSHS by CATS after 3 unexcused absences. WorkFirst staff will intervene with the parent after each unexcused absence to improve the parent's engagement in activities. The intervention will be documented in eJAS notes.**
- **WorkFirst employment services counselors will manually refer the parent back to DSHS with a recommendation for alternative services when it is apparent that employment services is not the appropriate activity for that parent.**

Portfolios:

- Employment services counselors may provide parents with portfolios to keep documentation in and to use as a tool to help them with finding a job. Local staff may require parents to use the portfolios, and present materials, as determined in their office, but it should be consistent among workers.

### WORK SKILLS ASSESSMENTS

- **Every WorkFirst parent must receive a Work Skill Assessment within 10 business days of entering employment services.**
- WorkSource staff and parents use all assessment information, coupled with labor market information, to determine the appropriate activities and to obtain the best job available.
- **A complete Work Skill Assessment will include employment history, education, employment strengths and job skills, as well as work interests and work values.**
- Any assessment tool used must provide results that can be used to link to occupational details as well as specific job openings.

**Results of the completed assessment process will:**

- **Be made available to each parent.**
- **Be documented in CATS as having been completed, and on the Steps to Employment plan.**
- **Be documented in SKIES as a service provided for those who are being "enrolled" in employment services (See Steps to Employment Plan below.) In addition, a full registration in SKIES, including the appropriate ONET employment code, must be completed for each WorkFirst parent.**

- **Be re-evaluated each time a parent re-enters employment services.**

#### **SERVICES DETERMINATION PROCESS**

The WorkFirst services determination process is attached to the Work Skill Assessment and allows staff to determine the appropriate type and level of services that each parent requires in order to find the best job he or she qualifies for.

- **The WorkFirst employment services counselor completes an individualized activities planner for each parent based on the results of the determination, with varying degrees of in-person contact and self-directed activities.** The counselor may also decide that the level of services needed differs from what the determination indicates based on other observations.
- **The WorkFirst employment services counselor sets CATS to reflect the appropriate days the parent must sign in.**
- At the point of services determination, or at any point during participation, the parent may be referred back to DSHS if it is apparent that employment services is not the appropriate activity. For example, parents who could benefit from Community Jobs services can be referred directly out of the up-front assessments or at any time during their employment services participation. In addition, staff can refer parents to WorkFirst training opportunities directly out of the assessment using the RZ code, or at any time during participation.

The services determination consists of an evaluation of the following:

- ❖ The parent's ability to demonstrate each of the five job search competencies, based on the competency checklists.
  - *The more competent, the less likely to need a high level of one-on-one services.*
- ❖ Recent work history, defined as six consecutive months of work in the past 12 months, including the conditions of work (seasonal, part-time, reason why job ended, etc.)
  - *Recent work history indicates the parent is less likely to need a high level of one-on-one services.*
- ❖ If currently employed.
  - *Parents who are working generally require less one-on-one service, and will be more likely to be self-directed in their activities.*
- ❖ Length of time on TANF and the services already received.
  - *The longer the stay on TANF could indicate a greater need for facilitated, structured activities.*
- ❖ Number of hours participating.
  - *The number of participation hours will influence the activities planning and level of services.*

#### **STEPS TO EMPLOYMENT PLAN**

The Steps to Employment plan captures information from the parent's Work Skill Assessment and local labor market employment opportunities to determine what kind of jobs the parent will be seeking.

- **A Steps to Employment plan will be completed, in CATS, for all TANF parents.**
- **The WorkFirst employment counselor will record completion of the plan in SKIES only for those parents who will be "enrolled" in employment services. (Versus those who are referred to CJST, CJ, Basic Education, back to DSHS, etc out of the assessment.)**
- **WorkFirst employment services counselors will ensure that the plan is reviewed each time a parent re-enters job search, and updated as necessary or as things change.**

#### **LABOR MARKET INFORMATION**

**WorkSource and WorkFirst employment services staff will make targeted job referrals based on the assessment results, and assist parents to:**

- **Use the assessment results and local labor market information to find the best possible job match.**

- **Access labor market information to make informed decisions about career choices.**
- **Record the results of the labor market research on the Steps to Employment plan.**

#### ACTIVITIES PLANNER

The activities planner is an important tool in the targeted employment services model, and directs parents to required activities and expectations based on the services determination results. It is the means used to notify DSHS staff of the activities and participation a parent is engaged in.

**WorkFirst employment services counselors will use the weekly Activities Planner to do the following:**

- **Ensure that each week the activities assigned reflect full-time participation, or participation that meets the demands for full activity engagement as appropriate for the hours of required participation shown on the Individual Responsibility Plan.**
- **Refer parents to workshops, job clubs, short-term job skills training, and other activities.**
- **Inform the parent of his or her participation requirements and expectations, including the specific days he or she is expected to report in person and sign into CATS.**
- **List all activities planned for each parent's success.**
- **Evaluate the participation in the listed activities at least weekly, holding the parent accountable for each listed activity.**
- **Update the plan to include more or less intensive services as appropriate.**
- **Update the plan weekly, listing activities appropriate for the next week including activities planned for resolving issues discovered during weekly evaluations.**
- **Indicate the number or level of employer contacts the parent is expected to make for the next week, after the parent is determined ready to begin employer contacts.**

#### WEEKLY EVALUATIONS

**Weekly evaluations will be done on a one-on-one basis for every parent. Weekly evaluations will include:**

- **Review of activities**
- **Updating the Activities Planner, including adjusting the level of services required, if necessary**
- **Provision of support services if needed**
- **Reinforcement of parent participation standards, and ensuring the parent understands his or her next steps**
- **Identification of issues affecting participation that need to be addressed**
- **Referral to other services available, such as Community Jobs or training options**
- **Provision of a targeted job referral each week after it is determined the parent is ready to begin contacting employers**
- **Evaluation of whether or not employment services is the appropriate activity or if other activities are needed at this time**

#### 12 WEEK EVALUATION

**During the twelfth week of employment services, for those who have not obtained employment, WorkFirst staff must conduct a joint evaluation to determine the best next activities for the parent to engage in. Staff do not have to wait until the twelfth week to make a determination if it is apparent that other services would be more appropriate for the parent.**

- **DSHS must be involved in the evaluation and determination of next steps.**

- Options for next services include Community Jobs, basic education, on-the-job training positions, Customized Job Skills or High Wage/High Demand training, additional employment services or other services that address issues that affect the parent's employability.

#### REFERRALS TO TRAINING

**Parents should be informed of approved training opportunities throughout their participation.**

- **Inform parents at the Work Skill Assessment and throughout job search of all WorkFirst approved training possibilities starting within the next 30 days, including Customized Job Skills Training, High Wage/High Demand training, and training combined with employment**
- **Allow college staff to provide information on Customized Job Skills Training**
- **Refer parents who express an interest in approved training at any time during participation, including directly after the Work Skill Assessment is completed**
- **Refer parents using the RZ component code in e-JAS**
- **Emphasize the need for the parent to follow through with the referral and explain the requirement to continue to participate in targeted employment activities while checking out training possibilities**
- **Keep parents in employment services if they are not approved for training**

#### EMPLOYMENT COMPETENCIES

Appropriate activities assisting parents in achieving the employment competencies include any or all of the services available in the WorkSource Center that address the specific needs of the parent and for which the parent is eligible. ESD WorkFirst employment counselors should:

- Not require parents to make employer contacts until all Employment Competencies are completed
  - Interviewing skills
  - 60 Second Commercial
  - Labor Market Information
  - Resume
  - Master Application
- Meet weekly with parents to assess and document progress on the Activities Planner towards completion of the Employment Competencies
- Document completion of each competency in CATS when the checklist criteria are met
- Determine whether or not a parent meets the checklist criteria for each competency each time they re-enter employment services using the competency checklist as a guide.

#### EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Upon completion of the Job Preparation activities, ESD WorkFirst counselors should:

- **Set up a schedule to meet at least weekly with the parent, instructing the parent regarding contacting employers and conducting an effective search for work.**
- **Provide at least one targeted job referral weekly, to employers from SKIES or to employers in the local labor market currently hiring for jobs consistent with the parent's skills and targeted goals.**
- Review job search logs, provide guidance.
- Coordinate with WorkSource and other efforts to connect parents with employers through hiring events, job development and other activities.
- **Record all services provided in SKIES.**

#### DOCUMENTATION IN E-JAS

**An ESD WorkFirst employment counselor will document eJAS in the following circumstances:**

1. Anytime a parent does not meet the participation standards, such as after one or more unexcused absences. Document the facts of any interventions, interviews or discussions meant to correct or improve participation.
2. When a parent is manually or otherwise referred back, the reason why and a recommendation needs to be noted.
3. When support services are provided, document the following:
  - a. Why the product or service is necessary (for job search, work or safety)
  - b. If applicable in your area, record other community resources that are considered
  - c. Both estimates for car repair, listing vendor and cost. Is the product the most economical option available? If employed, can the customer contribute to the cost?
  - d. Document employer verification for tools and that every employee or student has the same requirement. Also record that the tools are the minimum needed to begin employment or training. Has the cost been considered in determining where to purchase the needed tools?
4. Document justification for an On the Job Training or Work Experience Contract and information received as a result of monitoring visits.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

When a WorkSource staff person finds out a parent got a job, the following procedures are followed:

- **Record the employment in SKIES to take the appropriate credit**
- Notify the WorkFirst staff person who will:
  - **Close the JS component with an EE closure code**
  - **Open a PT (up to 31 hours a week) or FT component (32-40 hours a week)**
  - **Complete the employment screen in eJAS**
  - **Record the employment in SKIES to take the appropriate credit (If not already done)**
  - **Inform the parent of training options now that he or she is working**